

Student Learning Outcomes

Social-Sciences-2009

Five College Learning Outcomes:

1. Written, Oral and Visual Communication: *Communicate effectively in writing, orally and/or visually using traditional and/or modern information resources and supporting technology.*

2. Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning: *Locate, identify, collect, and organize data in order to then analyze, interpret or evaluate it using mathematical skills and/or the scientific method.*

3. Critical Thinking: *Differentiate between facts, influences, opinions, and assumptions to reach reasoned and supportable conclusions.*

4. Problem Solving: *Recognize and identify the components of a problem or issue, look at it from multiple perspectives and investigate ways to resolve it.*

5. Information Literacy: *Formulate strategies to locate, evaluate and apply information from a variety of sources - print and/or electronic.*

1. Degrees and Certificates

1. What degrees and certificates does your discipline offer?

Education: Transfer, Skills Certificate

Ethnic Studies, History, International Studies, Political Science, Social Science:
AA, Transfer

2. Keeping in mind the five College Learning Outcomes above as well as what your discipline specifically requires of your graduating students, what should students be able to do when they have completed your discipline's requirements for each degree or certificate?

- 1) Pursue advanced study for a career in teaching, in fields related to the Social Sciences, or in the private sector
- 2) Investigate the complexity and diversity of human experience
- 3) Communicate clearly, think independently, critically, and creatively
- 4) Participate as informed and ethical citizens of the world
- 5) Solve problems using the methodology of the Social Sciences

3. How do students in your program demonstrate that they meet each of the college-wide learning outcomes? What courses, activities, and/or projects are students required to complete that relate to each outcome?

i. Written, Oral and Visual Communication

Students engage in essay exams, in-class presentations as groups or individually, preparing research papers and oral presentations with accompanying visual presentations, in-class debates and participation in responding to scenarios.

As an example, in U.S. History students read primary sources and compare them to text book accounts and provide in-class presentations and assessments of the two.

ii. Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning

Students use the "scientific and quantitative reasoning" methodology of the Social Sciences - gather data, analyze and evaluate its authenticity, explain and critique competing analysis, present in written format and/or oral presentation.

As an example, in Ethnic Studies students research several accounts of diaspora, explain and critique and present their perspective in written and/or oral

presentations.

iii. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is required for gathering and evaluating data, explaining and critiquing competing analysis, and determining the priority of information used to support a particular perspective.

As an example, in history courses students evaluate the causes of particular wars, explain and critique analysis from historians and determine the major causes according to information they have gathered.

iv. Problem Solving

Problem solving strategies are used to assess past and current human behavior and determine long and short term consequences.

As an example, students in Economics and Political Science are given scenarios to discuss in class and to determine the best course of action given the circumstances and the discipline's methodology for assessing conditions.

v. Information Literacy

Students research and read text books, primary and secondary resources, Internet sites, refereed journals, and magazines. They attend lectures and museum exhibits, visit historical sites, conduct interviews of participants and experts in the field.

Students become familiar with resources used by professionals in each discipline and learn how to find and assess them.

II. General Education:

1. Does your discipline offer any classes which count for general education requirements?

Yes

2. Which General Education courses in your discipline address the each of the five College Learning Outcomes? Please list courses for each of the following:

i. Written, Oral and Visual Communication

Our courses teach history, social science, ethnic studies, education, economics, cultural geography, and political science. All of our courses have components of written, oral and visual communications. Students research and write papers, taken written exams, read and research written material, give oral presentations, study maps, learn from and prepare PowerPoint presentations, visit museums and ethnic or historical art shows.

ii. Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning

Courses in cultural geography and economics address scientific and quantitative reasoning. All the Social Science courses address the methodology of the specific disciplines.

iii. Critical Thinking

All of our courses have components with critical thinking and our CORs speak to critical thinking for each course. The social sciences teach students to think like social scientists, which requires developing overarching ideas or assumptions and assessing data that relate to and support ideas and assumptions.

iv. Problem Solving

Evaluating data, making educated assumptions and analyzing various explanations for social science conditions requires problem solving in our field.

v. Information Literacy

The social sciences are heavily dependent upon literacy skills and student access to a

variety of information sources in all our courses. Students research, read and evaluate journals, newspapers, web sites, magazines, text books, fiction and non fiction sources, museum collections, and historical sites in our courses.

III. Course Level Outcomes:

1. Do all of your Course Outlines of Record include Student Learning Outcomes? If not, are you revising them?

All of our courses include SLOs.

2. What percentage of faculty members in your discipline include SLOs in their course syllabi?

all

3. Assessment:

i. How often do you assess these SLOs?

All instructors assess student outcomes for every course as a part of the regular testing practices.

3. Assessment:

ii. In the last two years every discipline developed SLOs specifically related to College Learning Outcome #3: Critical Thinking. Have you assessed this or any of the stated Student Learning Outcomes in your course outlines over the last year? If so, please summarize the results.

We have tested the critical thinking SLO for history by assessing how students used resources to understand and evaluate the causes of the Civil War. We used rubrics to evaluate student essays and determine areas where added or alternative resources would provide a more complete understanding. In this example, students had difficulty relating specific events to particular theories and the rubrics gave us data to support adding lecture and written materials to shore up student understanding.

In political science, we conducted an in-class exercise in gerrymandering to illustrate the political issues involved in dividing up districts. We used overheads and handouts and students responded in groups to a scenario and then justified their recommended course of action.

3. Assessment:

iii. What improvements have you made or do you plan to make in the future?

We continue to use student feedback on exams and in class presentations to improve teaching methods and the selection of resources.

3. Assessment:

iv. What do you plan to assess this year? Who will you assess? How will you assess?

We plan to develop a critical thinking exercise in political science. We will assess this through responses to an essay prompt. We will develop a common problem solving scenario for the History 118 course that can also be tested in the Ethnic Studies courses.